
**Bay, Rivers and Watersheds Coordination Team
Minutes of the Meeting held March 22, 2006**

Participants of the meeting included Meg Kerr, Juan Mariscal, Kevin Flynn, Kevin Willis, Mike McMahon / Mike Walker, Tom Uva and Tom Getz
Others: R. Ribb, M. Pryor, J. King, K. Bergstrom, C. Young, D. Pryor et al.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were not approved for prior meetings.

II. Presentation to the House Finance Committee

Sue Kiernan went through the presentation that will be made to the House Finance Committee in April. Based on her presentation, the members made the following comments:

- Meg Kerr thought the slide concerning rivers and streams needs to be amended to indicate protection of this resource is critical. She will provide Sue with appropriate wording. She also thought the first slide should have examples of rivers and lakes and not just the bay.
- Either move or eliminate the first summary chart. People thought the committee would focus on this chart and it would be difficult to move the presentation from this slide.
- Juan Mariscal suggested we should add a slide on the goals of the CT.
- Meg Kerr suggested and other agreed, that each of the monitoring needs slides should indicate why this is a critical need.
- The presentation needs to begin and end with a slide that clearly spells out why monitoring needs to be funded.
- A slide needs to indicate what the total monitoring needs are versus what the CT is recommending as their priority. The group thought it was important to indicate the CT had evaluated a \$4M+ monitoring need and had prioritized the projects and agreed to move forward with only about \$1.3M of projects.
- There was discussion regarding how to represent the funding and it was proposed by Kip Bergstrom that the monitoring funds should be directed to DOA to be managed by the CT. Corresponding to this was the idea of dropping the agency column from the summary chart. There is a perception that having funds go to DEM will be viewed negatively.
- Juan Mariscal supported both Mike McMahon and Mike Sullivan making presentations but thought there might be interest in having other people join in on the presentation. Meg Kerr seemed to agree. People were aware of the meeting on Monday at DEM to finalize the presentation.
- The Chair position that is already funded should be included in the Coordination Team organization chart slide.
- Funding levels should be consistent between all slides.

- The slide concerning the cost of gages was not clear. In addition, Juan Mariscal, at his budget hearing mentioned the WSB indicated their needs for gages would be covered in the CT needs.
- Tom Uva questioned whether NBCs matching funds were included in the Large River Monitoring costs. Sue indicated they were. He also suggested including a slide that dealt with gaps, that was in the previous presentation be placed back into this presentation.
- Kevin Flynn wanted to make sure the legislature was aware of the need for monitoring. Funding of this proposal would not necessarily eliminate fish kills, but the monitoring will increase the scientific knowledge that will allow the state to make good scientific decisions on bay management. Sue Kiernan also mentioned that last summer DEM used the results of monitoring as an early warning mechanism. DEM and the local communities began to prepare for an event, if it did happen.
- The last slide should end with a picture, perhaps a split screen of a healthy bay versus one of a fish kill.

Sue agreed to work with EPC to update the draft PowerPoint presentation by Friday and re-distribute to the CT.

III. DISCUSSION OF NARRAGANSETT BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM (NPEP) PROPOSAL

Richard Ribb provided the group with a handout that detailed the collaboration that could happen between the NEBP and the CT. He recommended the “ad hoc” group be pulled together to continue working on issues. There was a brief discussion on this issue and Meg supported this proposal. Juan questioned on what would the group would do and others indicated there would not be support for this if the legislature did not fund the monitoring proposal. Richard was asked to provide an outline of the work to be accomplished at the next CT meeting.

IV. MONITORING PRESENTATION OF DR. JOHN KING

Dr. King provided the group with a presentation on two research projects involving work on monitoring the Bay. He indicated he is involved in developing mapping of the bay that indicates the nature of habitat quality. Two efforts, MAPCOAST (via USDA) and BAYMAP (via SeaGrant) are using the same methods to obtain new data. The projects use side-scan sonar and aerial photography to create a mosaic of bottom condition at a high-resolution that is ground-truthed. He thought this system could be used to assess freshwater bodies, but he is not doing this now. MAPCOAST is focused on sediments in waters less than 5 meters deep. Both projects have a number of partners engaged.

The mapping produces a detailed inventory of what’s out there on the bottom that has value to management issues such as identifying nutrient sources and sinks and coastal erosion. Also using a sediment profile camera that captures images that can be compared with a benthic habitat quality index. Mapping work was done in Ninigret Pond where there is concern about what is happening to the eelgrass. Current funding includes SeaGrant, NRCS, NOAA, IGERT/NSF, Champlain Foundation, CRMC and private sources. Projects are continuing but unfunded need is \$217,000 for equipment.

Dr. King’s second research project involves sediment cores and reconstruction of long-term trends inferred from sediment quality. Cores have been collected at Potter Cove, Providence River and Pettasquamscutt. Sediments are analyzed for various parameters. Able to track measures of eutrophication; e.g. increase delivery of organic matter to the sediment. Some

interesting early findings: Copper going up in Potter Cove (Jamestown) unlike rest of Bay is attributable to boat bottom paints.

From the sediment records, Dr. King provided a detailed analysis of trends in certain parameters in the Providence River dating back to 1800s. Changes in certain carbon/nitrogen constituents can be tracked and explained by changes in the operation of public wastewater treatment systems. Form of nitrogen released to the Bay has changed. It was his contention that additional work must be done to reduce nutrients in the river in order to stop eutrophication of the river.

At the end of his presentation he mentioned he would be working this summer with partners from Brown and Roger Williams Universities to conduct sampling of the bay. He will be doing this at no cost and he would share this data with the state.